

**Board of Trustees
Suffolk County Department of Parks
Recreation and Conservation**

Minutes of November 17, 2005 at Meadow Edge, West Sayville

BOARD MEMBERS

| | |
|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Alexander McKay | Chairman, Town of Huntington |
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PRESENT:

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|
| Ray Corwin | Vice Chairman, Member at Large |
| Charlie Bender | Member of the Board |
| Jeanine Dillon | Member of the Board |
| John Fritz | Trustee, Town of Babylon |
| Joseph Miller | Trustee, Town of Islip |
| Aurelio Colina | Trustee, Town of Southampton |
| Richard F. White, Jr. | Trustee, Town of East Hampton |
| Gary Olsen | Trustee, Town of Brookhaven |
| Gil Cardillo | Trustee, Town of Riverhead |
| Miles Borden | Trustee, Town of Smithtown |

ABSENT:

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| Vacant | Trustee, Town of Southold |
| Vacant | Trustee, Town of Shelter Island |

PARKS DEPARTMENT:

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| Ronald F. Foley | Commissioner |
| Tracey Belone | Deputy Commissioner |
| Colleen Hofmeister | Contracts Manager |
| Tom Hroncich | Intergovernmental Relations Coordinator |
| Bill Sickles | Sr. Superintendent of Parks |
| Nick Gibbons | Senior Environmental Analyst |
| Dorothy Rosado | Commissioner's Office |

GUESTS:

| | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Hon. Cameron Alden | Suffolk County Legislator |
| Hon. Jay Schneiderman | Suffolk County Legislator |
| Lauretta Fischer | Planning Department |
| Jennifer Kohn | Assistant County Attorney |
| Janet Longo | Assistant to the Director of Planning |

Chairman McKay called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. opening up the Public Portion. With no public in attendance, he moved on and asked those present to introduce themselves.

Montauk Observatory - Legislator Schneiderman reported that his main reason for being here is to discuss the Observatory. There are also a couple of resolutions, which he and Commissioner Foley have talked about involving fees for veterans and seniors that are waiting for trustee recommendations before they can move out of the Parks Committee. The Commissioner has the full details of the resolutions.

As to the Observatory project, Legislator Schneiderman said he met with the Commissioner, Bill

Sickles, Rich Martin and a few others on site to tour the grounds. There is a not-for-profit group, namely the Montauk Observatory, who is raising funds privately to build a university-grade observatory. We are very fortunate at the far end of the south fork to have extremely dark skies, largely due to a lot of open-space acquisitions and little development lending to very little light pollution. Hence, this is an extremely good site for observing the stars due in part to the county's financial investment to get it to this point. The high-tech 24 inch-wide telescope we are talking about acquiring is non-existent on Long Island. The idea is basically to use this as a facility for public education, to be able to tie into any program. If you look at the Master Plan for Montauk Park. It speaks about using the park for observatory experiences or stargazing experiences and is consistent with the Master Plan. Would like the ability to open this up on occasion to the public and maybe charge a nominal fee. This is something we could work out with the Park Commissioner.

The actual building to house this telescope would typically be about 17' x 20' with a dome or a gabled roof, etc. whatever would be appropriate for eligibility as a historic site. Legislator Schneiderman said he looked at various sites, but would like to keep the building very discreet, almost unnoticeable. He looked at a building that used to house the Pharaoh Museum, which has fallen into disrepair and has no current use, and discussed using that as a classroom building and building another structure off in an ell shape to house the telescope. We are looking at adaptive re-use of the current building. We would enter some type of partnership between the county and the Montauk Observatory group. There could be a license agreement where there would be some sharing of the cost of repairing the old Pharaoh Museum and the observatory people would bear the cost of building the structure that would house the telescope and associated costs.

The floor was opened to questions. Commissioner Foley commented that he felt this would be a nice amenity to add to a park, which we envision down the road to serve as an environmental center of some kind. Certainly the stars are part of our environment and this is part of the education we want to promote through the use of our parks. The Commissioner appreciates the Legislator's flexibility to find a spot that is minimally intrusive on the property. He feels that this idea is a good use of parks land and a good adaptive re-use of the building and would urge that it be approved.

A brief discussion ensued regarding use of the building, building another structure and the building location on site. The Commissioner said we could gear restoration to the use of this building, which could be for that museum, if that would suit them. If we could work them into the existing building, the place where the observatory is going to be could be an education center not attached to Third House itself.

Chairman McKay remarked that according to last month's Parks Trustee Board Minutes there was legislation proposed to have this donated to the county; is that no longer an issue? Legislator Schneiderman responded that there is no donation of a telescope to the county. He said that when he came to the county for the money, it was not approved. The not-for-profit would own the equipment; it would be a license agreement. The not-for-profit is doing very well with obtaining private financing. There is also a lot of interest from schools in maintaining it.

Trustee Colina asked when it would be opened and Legislator Schneiderman replied that it would just be for special stargazing events. Stony Brook and Suffolk Community College also would be providing technical assistance. Trustee Colina then inquired if the Legislator had any projections for a paid staff and if this would be open for the general public to go to. It would be staffed by volunteers and the facility could be available to the public on a reserved basis.

Chairman McKay asked if a fee would be charged and who that fee would go to. The legislator said there would be a nominal fee and who received it would depend upon the license agreement with the parks.

Trustee Corwin asked whether the not-for-profit would own the equipment and maintain it. Yes, that is what the current proposal is for.

Trustee Fritz asked if the general park user could avail oneself of this. The Legislator replied that the night has to be dark and you have to know how to use it. Trustee Fritz asked how word about the facility would get out to the local community. Legislator Schneiderman said they could post it to the internet and disseminate it through the Chambers of Commerce. Maybe, even link it to the county web site.

Trustee Cardillo asked about school groups, scouting groups, and science clubs -- would they be able to use the equipment as part of the general public. Yes, we want to reach out to schools and other groups because education is the primary purpose. These are our future astronomers and Intel finalists.

Trustee White motioned to approve the resolution in support of the observatory. Trustee Fritz seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Two Resolutions re Parks Fees - Commissioner Foley explained to Legislator Schneiderman and the Board that he would like to return to this issue at a later date to better deal with the fees in a more global aspect. He said he has asked Tom Hroncich, Parks, to prepare an analysis on fees in similar jurisdictions and neighboring to us and to come back to the trustees with a report of what is going on in the world of park fees. At this point he could come back to the Parks Committee with a fee structure that would be less confusing to the public and to us and fair and affordable to everybody. At the same time we could review discounted fees. Legislator Schneiderman stated that he would keep this issue tabled in Committee for now.

Legislator Alden- The Legislator announced that he brought Sachem High School students with him today who are looking into county government as part of their school project. They would only be staying for a portion of the meeting before leaving for a legislative committee meeting. Commissioner Foley presented them with some informational material on the Suffolk County Parks Board of Trustees, as well as other literature for their edification.

Suffolk County Park Police - Legislator Alden said he would like the Trustees to consider a law on the books, which requires that as Suffolk County purchases property, we add to the park police. We have not stayed in compliance with this law for some while. We will have to either change the law or comply with the law, which would be costly at this point in time. Legislator Alden has brought this to the attention of the County Executive and he is pretty sure the County Executive is working on it.

REAL ESTATE:

Lauretta Fischer reported on three acquisitions for review:

1. **Mud Creek in East Patchogue** – This property is at the headwaters of Mud Creek and was acquired from Central School District No. 4 and designated to Parks. There are two parts to this creek: the east branch (headwaters) and the left branch. We are looking to coordinate the holdings and put the whole piece into a massive property. This area is 16.5 acres under the multifaceted land preservation program, open-space component. Since it is under the open-space component, we are coming to the Board for approval. Ms. Fischer passed out copies of maps delineating the property via color-coded markings. Paper streets are owned by the town of Brookhaven and Legislator Alden asked if we were working with Brookhaven to abandon the paper streets (theoretically, some may be private). Ms. Fischer

responded that yes, eventually we would be working on that. Janet Longo commented that this is a filed map. At this point, Trustee Corwin noted the private plots up in the northeast corner of the map and asked Ms. Fischer whether she sensed if there was any real danger that theoretically some private citizen could decide to build their retirement retreat there since it would be surrounded by county land. Ms. Fischer said that they could, but so far the county has been fortunate. Trustee Colina asked if there was a projected time line for the acquisition and Ms. Fischer said about 30-60 days, unless an unusual situation arises.

Trustee Olsen motioned to approve the proposed resolution to purchase this property. Trustee Colina seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Mud Creek – K. Bird Property** - This property is in the same watershed down at the mouth of the Mud Creek area on the west side of the stream adjacent and north of other county-owned properties, which we acquired a couple of years ago. This is part and parcel of our attempt to acquire vacant open space in the area. It is a good acquisition due to the locality and environmental significance. It is 3.07 acres.

Trustee Olsen motioned to approve the proposed resolution to purchase this property. Trustee Miller seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. **Overton Property** - This is another piece of Brookhaven property for acquisition in the Overton Preserve area. This is a 21.3-acre site located on the east side of the area along a 20-acre lot. The town of Brookhaven has also indicated interest in helping us acquire the property in this approximately 400-acre area under the multi-faceted land preservation program for open space preservation.

Trustee Olsen motioned to approve the proposed resolution to purchase this property. Trustee Fritz seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Plans for Playground for Disabled Children, Lake Ronkonkoma - Commissioner Foley led the discussion on this with detailed questions being referred to Tom Hroncich, Parks. The Commissioner referred to an easel chart depicting renderings representative of what is proposed to be built as an all-access playground at Lake Ronkonkoma County Park. The playground is proposed to be built on the same site that essentially has a playground now, but on a much-larger expanded area. The NYS Education Department originally was going to fund this, but there is an ongoing disagreement as to whether funneling federal education funds for playground use meets the intended criteria; while proponents say that providing socialization education qualifies. Meanwhile, the County Executive and the Legislature have appropriated money to build all-access playgrounds here at Lake Ronkonkoma, as well as at other unspecified sites. Tom Hroncich has been working with Bruce Blower, Director of Handicapped Services, the Health Department, and DPW to come up with the best possible plan for this. This will not be a mediocre plan. Dr. Merle Zaglin of the Health Dept. and Bruce Blower want this to be a model for all-access playgrounds. Commissioner said he was a little concerned with the size, but listening to Mr. Blower talk about his rationale and the outreach to school districts and others his office would do to bring users into this park, has changed his mind. Also, while this is a pretty spot, usage at this playground is so low that it doesn't produce much revenue and the installation of a cutting-edge playground could be a very good thing. This is before you not as a change of use, but as an expanded use of real estate.

Tom Hroncich explained that the current playground is in a sand box off the lakeside of the

parking lot.

Trustee Miller asked if the funding is State and Federal, would it be like Hecksher State Park. Mr. Hroncich said the original money is not being used now; it is coming out of Capital funds. The Health Department receives flow-through funds from local school districts and when Dr. Zaglin mapped this out, many of the children being served came from the Lake Ronkonkoma School District and it just so happened that we had this playground in that area that was in need of repair. Trustee Miller asked if we could be more specific, i.e., are there strings attached? He recalled hearing designation or destination park and when I hear that I think of people taking buses or being brought in to utilize the park. The Commissioner responded that we could not turn people away. Trustee Miller asked about the use of Green Keys. Commissioner Foley said that everyone would have to live within the requirements of the park and having a Green Key is a legitimate requirement and it is not an unreasonable one.

Trustee Fritz asked what the habitat of the land in which the playground would be expanded into was like. Commissioner said it is just mowed lawn adjacent to a picnic area. A brief discussion ensued regarding another park/funding, etc. The Commissioner commented that the judgment here was that we wanted to see this built sooner rather than later so we expedited everything.

Chairman McKay asked what action is needed now by the Board. Commissioner Foley said that no legal action is required by the Trustees, but he would like to see a vote of endorsement by the Trustees for the concept presented.

Trustee Miller inquired how the school districts feel about this. The Commissioner said the school districts felt supportive enough of this to dedicate some of their incoming funds through the State/Federal education system to this idea.

Trustee Colina moved to support the proposal. Trustee Olsen seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

Election of New Chairman - Chairman McKay said his two-year term as Chairman has gone by very quickly and it has been his pleasure to serve. He opened the meeting to nominate a new chairman since he is term limited. Trustee White on behalf of all the Trustees thanked Chairman McKay for his work and dedication during his tenure.

Trustee White nominated Trustee Ray Corwin as the new chairman; seconded by Trustee Miller. Motion passed unanimously.

At this time, Chairman Corwin opened the floor to nominations for Vice Chair.

Trustee Fritz nominated Trustee Al Colina for Vice Chair; seconded by Chairman Corwin. Motion passed unanimously.

Chairman Corwin assured everyone that in two years he would like to try to move other people through who have not had the pleasure of being Chairman and Vice Chair and thanked Trustee Colina for accepting Vice Chair.

APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 20, 2005 MINUTES:

At this time amendments to the October 20th Minutes were made as follows:

Page 3 – In first sentence continued from Page 2 the word “spicket” is replaced with “spigot” to water...

Page 4 – Under Correction of September 22 Minutes noted Page 8, the change from “Shadmoor” to “Shagmoor” should read “Shadmoor” to “Shagwong.”

Page 6 – In the fourth paragraph, fourth sentence beginning, “Ms. Longo said it consisted of...should also include the Presiding Officer’s representative...”

Page 7 – Third paragraph, last sentence should read ... going out for a five-year contract with two additional five years.

Page 7 – Fourth paragraph last sentence change to “The only advantage for an existing concessionaire is that they are already well-known and established.”

Page 11 – First sentence should read ...he will be retiring from his permanent position. And strike “this will be his last Trustee meeting.” [As a result amend the second sentence to read “thank him for his continued efforts...and the third sentence to read...that it is a pleasure and a benefit...”

Trustee Miller motioned to approve the amended Minutes and Vice Chairman Colina seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT:

Scully Estate – We are moving forward toward a final agreement with Seatuck Environmental organization to occupy the premises. They have taken their first review of the County Attorney’s recommendation, and as expected had some suggested changes. We are trying to work that out and expect to come to a conclusion soon. There is a resolution coming before the Environmental Committee at the Legislature this afternoon to appropriate \$2 million from the Greenways Fund toward the creation of the Suffolk County Greenways Fund Environmental Interpretive Center at this site. DPW is working on engaging an architect that did some work for Seatuck to finish up the planning phase in order to go out for bids on the construction to restore the mansion and create the space for the interpretive center. Based on costs, we will not be able to renovate the second floor for Seatuck that would be up to them. We are trying to incorporate into the contract the ability to rent space out to other not-for-profits who share our mission for the space.

Longwood Soccer League Proposal for Cathedral Pines - The Commissioner will draft a new response to the league to advise them of the many controls required for use of this field, which would make their current proposal very difficult to accomplish. He will communicate back to them the essence of the conversations of the Board of Trustees, and Chairman Corwin’s comments regarding the Pine Barrens Commission review and explain that they will have to prove that all other alternatives have been exhausted and leave it up to them if they want to present the Board with another proposal.

Trustee McKay said that he is of the opinion that this is totally incompatible with the existing situation for use and the character of the area. Trustee Borden said that he is in total agreement with the Commissioner on this.

Discovery of Apparent Native American Human Remains - The Commissioner reported artifacts were unearthed due to erosion and high winds at Indian Island County Park. All materials have been collected, some were taken by the medical examiner but have been returned to us, and all are locked in a safe for safe keeping at the park—not to be removed. He has met twice with the Inter-tribal Burial Protection Council that has representatives of the Shinnecock Tribe as members to get their best advice on how we are to handle these materials. We are awaiting their recommendations as to how to possibly re-inter the remains and artifacts. It is our goal to cooperate to the best of our ability.

Chairman Corwin remarked how impressed he was by the reaction of the Parks Commissioner, Parks staff, and Parks Police with protection of the site, but was befuddled by the apparent lack of any Federal or State laws regulating what must be done with this sort of finding. The Commissioner agreed, saying there are four states that don’t have laws on what to do. There is a piece of legislation that has been up for consideration for several years. In New York State we fall

into a weird category; there is no Federal governing legislation, nor State, on how to handle this. The Commissioner said it is his feeling that there is resistance to put new controls on privately-owned developable property. Hence, based on advice from the L.I. Archaeological Society, Dr. David Bernstein, the right thing to do is go to the nearest, modern tribe, discuss the situation, and take their guidance the best way we can and that is how we progressed.

Trustee Cardillo asked if anything was being done about the major erosion at this site. Commissioner Foley said no, because we are trapped by regulations. If it was determined it was an emergency, we could go in, but now we have to come up with a plan and go to DEC for review to get a permit because it is coastal property. We are waiting for a plan from the Shinnecocks before we do a permit application to protect the property.

Chairman Corwin asked the Commissioner if he has gotten guidance as to whether one has to do an archeological survey of the area. The Commissioner said that the general rule is; if you are not going to disturb it, don't go looking around.

Reservation System Update - Deputy Commissioner Bellone reported that the committee met and selected a Long Island vendor, US eDIRECT, based in Hauppauge. The Deputy distributed a sampling of their work from the bid package. The RFP Committee consisted of representatives from Purchasing, County Executive's Technology Unit, and Parks. Of the three companies who responded to the RFP, two were from out of state and everyone thought that the LI Company, US eDIRECT would do an excellent job. We brought material to the Suffolk County Committee for Camping and they liked the features the company provided as well. US eDIRECT gave the county everything it was looking for plus even better features than were asked for. We have a meeting planned with the County's technology unit, Parks and US eDIRECT to discuss implementing the program. We have also received assurances from US eDIRECT that they would have installation at most of the sites by January 1, 2006.

Legislator Alden asked if we would be paying for this under a license, would the company operate it, or do we own and operate it? We would own the system and pay them an annual maintenance fee for their availability for customer service. Legislator Alden asked if the system could go broader by interfacing with LICVB, or others. The cards probably could be read by other places and the product shared, but at this time, we basically kept it confined to Suffolk County park facilities because we have so many.

Trustee Miller asked the Deputy if in the future, to avoid county employees handling cash, could we tie this into an Empire-Pass or an Easy-Pass system. Deputy Bellone said yes; this was a question in the RFP and everyone said they had the capability to do this, but it would not be part of the initial phase.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:

Chairman Corwin said not having been Chairman; he did not have a report. As he tried to do during his previous tenure as Chairman, he would try to attend as many of the Parks & Environmental Committee meetings as his schedule would permit and he would encourage Vice Chair Colina to do that as well, along with all the other Trustees. The presence of the Trustees at the meetings of the Legislature, just as the Legislators' presence at the Trustee meetings, goes a long way towards having the Legislature understand why we accept or reject something and visa versa. With all the changes in the 2006 schedule, Chairman Corwin strongly encouraged all the Trustees to make a commitment to attend at least one or two of the Legislature's meetings, especially the committee meetings those that deal with parks and environmental issues are very important. Chairman requested that the Commissioner's secretary make available to the Trustees the 2006 Committee Schedule as soon as that becomes available so as to be able to coordinate those meetings with trustee meetings.

Trustee McKay thanked the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and the whole staff who served the parks so well over the last two years that he has been chairman, and then over the 30+ years that he has been a trustee. It has been a pleasure to work with everyone.

OLD/NEW BUSINESS:

Old Business

- Trustee Fritz asked the Commissioner to enlighten him on the matter of the Smith Point pier. The Commissioner replied that he had heard a rumor that we have the FINS permit, now we need a DEC and Core permit, which should not be as time consuming to receive, so this is a milestone.

Chairman Corwin asked the Commissioner to explain to the Trustees why FINS has a voice geographically and logically in this. Commissioner explained that although Smith Point is a County Park, the congressionally-adopted boundary line goes around and includes Smith Point County Park, so that gives them some authority and responsibility in what goes on there and in issuing permits. The pier is significant and environmentally sensitive enough that we wanted to make sure we touched all the right bases. Eighteen months ago we were told it would take about six months to get this approved. Chairman Corwin asked if the review was done locally. Commissioner replied that it was both. The review is first local and then it goes to the regional office.

Trustee Fritz asked if it is in the hands of the DEC and Fish & Wildlife, are they aware that they need to come back to us. Commissioner said we are in a transition place and until we get the hard copy of the FINS permit, we cannot go the next step. For the benefit of new people here, Trustee White asked for an explanation of where the pier would be at Smith Point and what it would look like. Commissioner said it would roughly be in the northeast corner of the parking field on the bayside— looks like a pier going out into the bay that you can fish from. It is a DPW design and would be about a 110 ft.-long fixed pier, it allows for ice movement, and meets all county limitations.

Legislator Schneiderman advised that there is a County Law prohibiting CCA-treated wood in marine environment. He said that any submerged material cannot be CCA (pressure-treated) since it shows that it is detrimental to marine life, but there are some exceptions. Commissioner asked Mr. Sickles if we purchase CCA wood any longer and Mr. Sickles said we have not been purchasing it for any in-house projects.

Roundtable

New Business

Vice Chair Colina asked Colleen Logan Hofmeister for a quick update on RFPs. Ms. Hofmeister reported:

Cupsogue— Four people picked up RFP packages--they are due back on 12/08/05.

Cedar Pt. Camp Store— was advertised today (11/17) and proposals are due back in January.

Trustee White inquired about **Third House**. Commissioner Foley said the proposals have come back and DPW is negotiating with the successful bidders to sign them up for contracts. One proposer didn't have all the right paperwork, but that is the last hurdle and we are close to having them all signed. Legislator Schneiderman asked if there was any chance of scheduling Shakespeare Festival for summer 06. Commissioner said he doesn't think so. The highest priority has got to be to get this restored and the Commissioner feels we can't have anything interfere with the construction. There may or not be any cabins available. We just don't know at this time.

Trustee Miller asked about the **Dune Road property** where the county had a walkway on private property and the County Attorney was waiting for a deed from a private individual in litigation...what happened? Bill Sickles said this has nothing to do with our boardwalk. The referenced boardwalk was built by four homeowners on the north side who had an easement to do the work, but it was built partially on county property. We haven't heard anything from the County Attorney on it. Commissioner and Mr. Sickles asked Jennifer Kohn from the CA office, if she had anything to add to this, but she didn't have any other information. Chairman Corwin asked Ms. Kohn if she would get a report on this for next month's Trustee meeting.

Commissioner Foley spoke of an apparent encroachment in East Hampton, which the police have been investigating, specifically, an ATV park that someone cleared county property in T. R. Roosevelt County Park to access their private property inviting erosion problems. The DA is looking into it.

Commissioner Foley also spoke about an issue Trustee Miller had mentioned earlier; the so-called nature **trail at West Sayville**. He explained that this is not really a trail, but more of a maintenance road where we stockpile materials for use on the golf courses.

Trustee Fritz reported that the town is doing work **Oak Beach Park**. At a State Park meeting last night, he said that attendees were saying they wanted parking access at Orient State Park so they can fish on County Park property in a little area opposite the ferry. Trustee Fritz asked for clarification about the parking. Mr. Sickles said they do not need Orient State Park open because there is an easement out there all the way to the point where they can park; however, they can also park at Orient.

Legislator Alden remarked that the Suffolk County Park system is second to none and he receives good feedback about our parks. He thanked everyone for the time and effort they put in.

Chairman Corwin said looking ahead to 2006; one of the meetings that is held on occasion is the joint meeting between Suffolk County Parks Board of Trustees and the Long Island Office of New York State Parks and Recreation Commission. We initiated this in 2003, and had one in 2004, but none in 2005. I would request that the Commissioner's Office reach out on behalf of the Trustees to corresponding colleagues in the state parks office in Belmont to start exploring dates to schedule this meeting in 2006. Chairman Corwin feels it is a good idea to exchange information and continue the tradition. They hosted the first meeting, we hosted the second at Timber Point, so maybe we could rotate and pose it to them to host the next one.

DATE AND LOCATION OF THE NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, December 15, 2005 at MeadowEdge in West Sayville. Please note the time of the meeting will be 10:00 a.m. to avoid conflict with the Legislature's schedule.

Trustee Dick White motioned to adjourn the meeting and Vice Chair Colina seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Dorothy Rosado.